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LETTER DATED 7 SEPTEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 7 September 1998 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, giving Iraq's comments on the report given by the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission to the Security Council on 3 September 1998 and on the letter dated 2 September 1998 from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency addressed to the President of the Security Council concerning the current situation of the monitoring regime following Iraq's decision of 5 August 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 7 September 1998 from the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should here like to present our comments on the report given to the Security Council by the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on 3 September 1998 and on the letter dated 2 September 1998 from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concerning the current situation of the monitoring regime following Iraq's decision of 5 August 1998.

I. Report of the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission

The report given by the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission contained, as usual, sophistries and lies that had the objective of distorting the facts before the Council.

1. Sites subject to monitoring

The sites covered by the plan for ongoing monitoring under resolution 715 (1991) were not designated by Iraq, as is claimed by the Executive Chairman, but by the Special Commission. In the course of the high-level talks held in New York in September 1993, the Special Commission, adopting a broad and extreme approach, designated the sites to be covered by ongoing monitoring in the missile, biological, chemical and nuclear areas as well as many other sites that bore no relation to past programmes. The Commission classified those sites as follows: core sites; supporting sites; and secondary sites.

After Iraq officially accepted resolution 715 (1991) in November 1993, the Special Commission requested its cooperation in preparing what it called protocols concerning each site to be monitored by the Special Commission. Iraq prepared drafts of such protocols and submitted proposals to the Special Commission on the form they should take, and it proposed modalities for the monitoring of the core sites. These proposals were accepted by the Special Commission, and it commended them in its April 1994 report.

The Special Commission did not content itself with Iraq's declarations concerning the sites subject to monitoring but endeavoured to dispatch what it called "baseline inspection teams" in order to verify the Iraqi declarations and identify new sites for monitoring. These baseline inspections took six whole months and, in all, the Special Commission dispatched 16 such teams. The Special Commission also made alterations to the technical annexes to the monitoring plans approved by resolution 715 (1991), with the result that other sites became subject to monitoring that had not been mentioned in the original annexes.

In August 1994, the Special Commission acknowledged that the monitoring system was in place and was functioning effectively.

The monitoring system currently covers 496 sites in all parts of Iraq, and there are more than 70 other sites that are constantly visited by the export/import monitoring group. Twenty-two sites are monitored by cameras. The Special Commission and IAEA also use tags and seals, and there are 2,151 of them on machines and items of equipment and 9,026 on missiles. Dozens of miscellaneous sensors are also deployed at many sites, and the relevant monitoring groups carry out unannounced inspection visits at a rate of 10 to 15 a day. Helicopters are used for aerial reconnaissance of various areas in Iraq on an almost daily basis. For your information, the numbers of sites subject to monitoring in each area of activity are as follows:

40 in the missile area;

119 in the chemical area;

175 in the biological area (including 80 general hospitals);

162 in the nuclear area.

Accordingly, the claim that there are other sites that are required to be visited and inspected under the monitoring plan is groundless. It is tendentious propaganda of a kind that is politically motivated and engages in overstatement and exaggeration for political reasons.

2. Incidents raised by the Executive Chairman in his briefing to the Security Council on 3 September 1998

(a) The account given in paragraph 9 of the notes for Mr. Butler's briefing to the Security Council on 3 September 1998 is sophistical, is an attempt to mislead the Council and represents a fabrication against the Iraqi side. The true state of affairs is set forth hereunder.

The flight test of the Samoud missile on 11 August 1998 was being videotaped by the MG-18 missile monitoring group, in whose presence it was being carried out. When preparations for launch had been completed and the missile had been placed on the launcher, the group sought to approach the missile and photograph it before launching and while still on the launcher. They were allowed to do so. When this was over, a member of the group asked to photograph a theodolite, a general-purpose instrument used in surveying land that was being used to ascertain that the missile had been raised to a vertical position and to verify the presentation of the missile while being raised onto the launcher. The representative of the National Monitoring Directorate (NMD) objected to this because the instrument in question has nothing to do with determining the range of a missile, as claimed by Butler in his briefing, and is not among the technologies to which reference is made in annex IV to the monitoring plan approved by resolution 715 (1991). None of the members of the MG-18 group objected to this.

(b) The incident mentioned in paragraph 10 of the briefing notes concerns a request from the MG-18 missile monitoring group to the NMD on 16 August 1998 to be allowed to visit a military workshop inside a camp that is not covered by the monitoring regime. The group's allegation that the facility was a workshop and

that it contained equipment was untrue, and there is no such workshop in the camp to which reference is made in the notes. We stated as much to the missile monitoring group at the time.

(c) Paragraph 11 of the briefing notes concerns a request, also from the MG-18 missile monitoring group, for access to inspect a military site that is not subject to monitoring. The rationale for the request was the presence at the site of tagged missile components, although there is a mechanism for the monitoring of such tagged parts or missiles on which agreement was reached in 1993 and which has been in effect ever since. This mechanism consists, briefly, in the Special Commission providing the Iraqi counterpart with the numbers assigned to tagged missiles or components and the numbers assigned to the tags that it wishes to scrutinize in order to ascertain that no modifications or improvements have been made. Under this mechanism, the Iraqi side presents and displays the components or missiles in question at locations of its own choosing. This procedure is currently in effect and there is presently in Iraq a special team for this kind of activity, designated MG-18A, which arrived in the country on 1 September 1998.

It is clear from the foregoing that the statement made by the Executive Chairman in his briefing to the Security Council to the effect that Iraq has restricted the Special Commission to inspecting only sites previously declared by Iraq is absolutely untrue. Iraq informed the Special Commission on 5 August that the Special Commission had the right to inspect the sites subject to monitoring under resolution 715 (1991), not those declared by Iraq (see attachment).

II. Letter of the Director General of IAEA

1. Cooperation with IAEA is still continuing in an effective and normal manner in the field of ongoing monitoring. What have indeed been suspended are the activities relating to disarmament that the Agency stated it had completed, fully and in a comprehensive manner, in paragraph 72 of document S/1997/779 of 8 October 1997.

2. IAEA is currently engaged in inspection activities at 162 sites (State establishments, factories, universities and institutes, oil-related sites and hospitals) in full cooperation with the Iraqi side. It should be noted that most of these sites bear no relation to nuclear activities.

3. The Agency is also currently engaged, in an ongoing manner and on an almost daily basis, in conducting an environmental radiometric survey of all industrial establishments as well as of all the neighbourhoods and streets of Baghdad and of the other governorates throughout Iraq in order to verify the absence of all nuclear activity.

4. The Agency is currently implementing an environmental monitoring programme. It has installed two air-sampling systems in Baghdad and has designated six more sites for the installation of such systems, and the Iraqi side is providing all the facilities required for the operation of these systems.

Accordingly, the plan for ongoing monitoring and verification is currently operating in an effective manner and on a wide scale. The ongoing monitoring and verification activities undertaken by the Agency between 5 August and 5 September 1998 consisted of 36 inspection visits and 21 radiation surveys. Any allegation that implementation of the plan for ongoing monitoring and verification is being restricted is untrue or inaccurate. To establish this fact, reference can be made to the figures for and frequency of the inspection activities presently under way and to the inspection activities carried out by the Agency in years past and during the aforesaid period.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister